

Commissioner Deborah A. Gist's Weekly Field Memo
July 15, 2011

Note from Commissioner Gist:

1. RIDE [e-mail](#) server performing poorly

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Action Item Calendar

Today (July 15): Physical-restraint reports due
Today (July 15): Personnel Assignment Process submissions due
Monday (July 18): End-of-year data reports due
Extended deadline: July 22: Housing-aid reimbursement forms due
July 25: Educator evaluators training-registration deadline
July 28: Absences, ADA, ADM, Suspension reports due
July 31: Fire, evacuation, lockdown drill reports due

Note from Commissioner Gist:

1. RIDE e-mail server performing poorly

We have been aware that the RIDE e-mail server has been balky for at least a week. We are in the process of upgrading the server. We expect RIDE e-mail to be down over part of the weekend, but we expect that service will be back to normal – in fact, better than ever – next week. If you suspect that any of your messages to or from RIDE have not been received, please follow up with a phone call or text message. We are sorry for this temporary inconvenience.

From RIDE:

2. Housing-aid forms deadline extended to July 22

Please see this note from our Office of Statewide Efficiencies:

School districts that complete school housing projects for repair, renovation, or new construction may be eligible for state housing-aid reimbursement, pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 16-7-35 through 16-7-47. These laws are designed to guarantee adequate school housing for all public-school children and to prevent the cost of school housing from interfering with the effective operation of the schools. Fiscal Year 2012 housing-aid instructions and forms are now available online. For detailed information, instructions, and forms, please visit:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/Finance/Funding/construction/default.aspx>

Please note that the deadline for submission of housing-aid forms has been extended to Friday, **July 22**. Please contact Mario Carreno, at 222-8030, if you have any questions.

3. RIDE begins Race to the Top LEA gap-analysis work sessions

Please see this notice from our Race to the Top team:

In preparation for the launch of the Collaborative Learning for Outcomes (CLOs) networks this fall, RIDE will conduct implementation-capacity gap-analysis work sessions with every LEA participating in Race to the Top (RTTT). The purpose of the gap-analysis work sessions is to analyze district readiness to implement the RTTT projects that are rolling out this coming school year. We are piloting this gap-analysis process with four volunteer LEAs (Johnston, North Providence, Portsmouth, and Westerly) this week and next week. Many thanks to the teams from those districts for working with us in the pilot phase. We will be reaching out

to schedule gap-analysis work sessions with all other LEAs in the near future. For more information about scheduling the gap-analysis work sessions, please contact Elaine Budish, at 222-8436 or elaine.budish@ride.ri.gov.

4. Programs scheduled for induction coaches, beginning teachers

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

Thank you for passing on the information about the Human Resource (HR) Information Session we held on June 29; we had a great turnout. We will be scheduling a makeup session for those districts that were not able to send a representative. The feedback we received was positive, and most expressed an interest and need to attend regular sessions like the one on the 29th. We are working on getting a regularly scheduled date up to four times per year to provide updates and training on human-resource issues regarding certification, data entry, and initiatives at RIDE.

We explained at our HR Information Session that we need the districts' assistance in identifying our beginning teachers for the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Induction Program. As beginning teachers are hired in your districts, please have your HR personnel or an appointed person provide us with their information by going to the following link:

<https://sites.google.com/site/riinduction/district-data-entry>.

If for some reason this link does not work for you, a spreadsheet is available to fill out and send back to RIDE. Please contact Donna Okrasinski, at donna.okrasinski@ride.ri.gov, to have the spreadsheet e-mailed to you.

We will be sending pamphlets to each district for your beginning teachers. The pamphlet contains a welcome letter signed by Commissioner Gist and brief information about the R.I. Beginning Teacher Induction Program. The finalized pamphlet will soon be posted on our Web site at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/mentoring.aspx>.

Our Induction program is preparing to lift off. We are finalizing our locations for upcoming trainings. Our Induction Coach training begins July 25. This first training, July 25 – 28, will be held at the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative. We are looking forward to working with this extremely talented group of teacher leaders.

We will be holding R.I. Beginning Teacher Program Orientation for beginning teachers on August 16 and 18. Each day, there will be a morning and an afternoon session, and beginning teachers should plan to attend one half-day session. Registration information will come next week. We will also have two make-up dates for this orientation, on September 1 and September 29' after school hours.

As always, if you have any questions or feedback, do not hesitate to contact Hilda or Donna:

Hilda Potrzeba, at hilda.potrzeba@ride.ri.gov or 222-8891;

Donna Okrasinski, at donna.okrasinski@ride.ri.gov or 222-8982.

Thank you for your support and assistance in accelerating the performance of new teachers to enhance student achievement.

5. Rhode Island Model Guide for Evaluating Building Administrators and Teachers posted on RIDE Web site

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

The 2011-12 Rhode Island Model Guide is now posted on our Web site at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/>.

We have included all guidance related to measures of student learning in this guide, for your convenience.

We could not have completed this endeavor without your support, feedback, and participation in the many stages of model development. Thank you for your ongoing help. Next month, we will release a guide specifically for teachers about their evaluation process.

Before the Rhode Island Model is fully implemented in school year 2012-13, we want to ensure that educators get a chance to practice implementing the system and to provide us with feedback. This gradual-implementation process will help us learn what's working and what we need to do

better. Together, we can identify challenges and begin developing solutions so that schools can move forward with confidence when full implementation begins in 2012-13.

We have strategically staggered the training sessions to provide you with the information and skills you need in time to implement each component. As you map out your implementation plan and register for trainings, please take this concept into consideration. Staff should not be required to implement components of the system until after receiving the related training. For example, if your district's evaluators complete an observation training module in November, they will still have the remainder of the year to conduct the two required observations (one short, one long).

However, please note that the R.I. Model Guide contains detailed guidance on the entire system, in order to allow you to begin planning implementation and starting the process.

For more detailed information about the gradual-implementation process, please review document on our Web site, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/EducatorQuality/EducatorEvaluation/>

6. Registration open for Module 2 for personnel evaluating teachers

Please see this notice from our Office of Educator Quality and Certification:

For personnel responsible for evaluating teachers, Module 2 “Preparing for Beginning-of-Year Conferences,” will be offered 28 times between August 22 and September 29. Trainings will be offered in a variety of locations across the state.

Based on your feedback, we have improved the registration process, and all future registrations will take place on the workshop-calendar section of the RIDE Web site.

To register for Module 2 for personnel responsible for evaluating teachers, please follow the directions below:

Visit the workshop calendar section of the RIDE Web site, at:

<http://www.ride.ri.gov/applications/ridecalendar.aspx>

In the calendar, locate the date on which you would like to attend a session for “Module 2 for Personnel Evaluating Teachers: Preparing for Beginning-of-Year Conferences” and click on your desired time slot (sessions are typically offered once in the morning and once in the afternoon).

Click on “Register Now”; then click the green “Register” button.

Log in using an existing eRIDE account or create a workshop-registration account, and click on the green “Register” button a second time.

Select the session you wish to attend, and scroll to the bottom to verify your registration and contact information.

If you are registering only yourself, click “Register Myself.” You should receive a “Successfully Registered!” message and your registration will be complete.

If you want to register multiple participants, click “Register Others” and complete a separate registration form for each person. This option allows a single user to register a group of participants for a training module.

As always, your feedback and questions are welcome at EdEval@ride.ri.gov.

From the U.S. Department of Education:

7. U.S. Department of Education announces seminar series for teachers

Please see this notice from the U.S. Department of Education:

The U.S. Department of Education is inviting teachers to participate in a summer seminar series on education policy, and leveraging U-Stream technology to engage teachers nationwide. The summer teachers’ series was organized by Laurie Calvert, a Teaching Ambassador Fellow and English teacher at a rural high school in North Carolina. Ms. Calvert is currently serving a full-time appointment based at the Department’s headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The seminars are intended to offer insights into how teachers can participate in the national and state dialog on education. The seminars are scheduled to be held every other Thursday from 6 - 7 p.m. The next seminar, on State and Federal Roles and Responsibilities, is scheduled for July 28.

To register, click on:

[Register to attend the Summer Seminars at the U.S. Department of Education or to view the Summer Seminars online through U-Stream](#)

From other state agencies:

8. Department of Revenue issues letter on new requirements for financial reporting

Please see this communication for Susanne Greschner, Chief of the Division of Municipal Finance:

Now that the legislative session is over, the Division of Municipal Finance ("Division") would like to inform you of some of the financial-reporting requirements that were included in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 state budget as enacted.

The FY 2012 enacted budget implements time limits as to when certain reports have to be submitted to the Division and adds financial reporting requirements for cities and towns, such as providing for a five-year forecast. Below, I have highlighted the major changes for your convenience. These include:

- *Adopted Budget Survey:* A municipality shall provide an Adopted Budget Survey report to the Division within 30 days of final action.
- *Five-Year Forecast:* A municipality shall provide a five-year forecast, in the form and format required by the Division, for major funds, as defined by generally accepted accounting principles as established by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) within 30 days of final action on the budget. The forecast shall include, but not be limited to, a scenario reflecting pensions and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) obligations at 100 percent of the Annually Required Contribution, both for the general and unrestricted school funds. The forecast shall also reflect any and all underlying assumptions. Please note that the Division will reach out to cities and towns in the coming days to form a small working group to develop a form and format for submission. Once the format is established, it will be distributed to municipalities for completion.
- *Fiscal-Impact Statement:* A municipality shall provide a Fiscal Impact Statement to the Division within 60 days of executing any changes to pension, OPEB, or healthcare benefits. The impact statement should reflect the impact on any unfunded liability and Annually Required Contribution (ARC), as well as the impact on the five-year forecast as a result of such changes. The statement must show the underlying actuarial assumptions and support for underlying assumptions.

- *Electronic Reporting:* A municipality shall join electronic reporting or implement a municipal uniform chart of accounts (UCOA) within six months of implementation. Please note that there are no immediate plans to establish a municipal UCOA. However, the Division will reach out to the communities that agreed to be part of a pilot project for the establishment of a state-municipal Intranet.

- *Quarterly Reports:* The chief financial officer shall submit a quarterly report on or before the 25th day of the month succeeding the end of the fiscal quarter to both the Division and the Auditor General. In addition, each quarterly report submitted must be signed by the chief executive officer, the chief financial officer, **as well as the superintendent and the chief financial officer for the school district.** Furthermore, the report must now be submitted to the city or town council president and the **school-committee chair.** It is encouraged, but not required, to have the council president and **school committee chair** sign the report as well. *[Emphasis added.]*
- *Projecting Year-End Deficits:* If any of the quarterly reports project a year-end deficit, a corrective-action plan signed by the chief executive officer and chief financial officer must be submitted to both the Division and the Auditor General on or before the last day of the month succeeding the close of the fiscal quarter (RI Gen Laws 45-12-22.2).
- *Likelihood of Year-End Deficit:* RI Gen Laws 45-12-22.3 has been amended to require each municipality to notify both the Auditor General and the Division within 30 days if it is likely that a municipality will incur a deficit and immediately develop a plan to eliminate the deficit.
- *Certification of Tax Rolls:* RI Gen Laws 44-5-22 has been amended to require each municipality to submit its certified tax roll to the Division no later than the next succeeding August 15.

- *General Powers and Duties of **School Committees***: RI Gen Laws 16-2-9 (f) states that “in the event that any obligation, encumbrance, or expenditure by a superintendent or a school committee is in excess of the amount budgeted or that any revenue is less than the amount budgeted, the school committee shall within five working days of its discovery of potential or actual over-expenditure or revenue deficiency submit a written statement of the amount of and cause for the over-obligation or over-expenditure or revenue deficiency to the city or town council president...; the statement shall further include a statement of the school committee’s plan for corrective actions necessary to meet the requirements of subsection (d). The plan shall be approved by the Auditor General.” RI Gen Laws 16-2-9 (f) has been amended to require that this plan be also submitted to the Division.

Here is a link to FY 12 H-5894 Aaa Article 12 as amended:

<http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText/BillText11/HouseText11/Article-012-as-amended.pdf>

If you have any questions, please contact me, at 222-7700 or at susanne.greschner@dor.ri.gov.